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ABSTRACT

This booklet, designed as a convenient guide for young baby-sitters, covers the essentials of providing good child care and establishing a good relationship with parents. There are brief discussions on dealing with parents and the sitter's limits within the home; other sections provide a guide to: (1) getting along with and protecting the children; (2) games and toys appropriate for younger children; (3) hints on feeding and dressing young children; (4) common problem situations and easy ways to handle them; (5) putting the child to bed; (6) common and serious injuries and illnesses which may arise, including some simple first aid procedures. (ED)

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Welcome to the 1,000,000

When you decide to become a babysitter, you are joining a group of over one million teenagers enjoying the trust of American parents and the many agencies and businesses dedicated to the care and development or well-being of infants and children. It is a serious job and one which can be fun.

With training and practice most young people can become first rate sitters. Taking care of young children is a natural job for teenagers because they usually like youngsters and often have a real knack for playing with them. Also, most children like being with young people.

Safety first

If we had to sum up the most important part of your job in one word, this would be it: Safety. The children you care for *must* be kept away from harm. Later on we will have more to say about this. Four other points to keep in mind right at the start are these:

- When you become a sitter you take the place of the parent. This does not

mean that you become the parent.

- You must handle the child to the best of your ability according to the rules set down by the parent.
- You yourself are a special human being with special skills and ways of your own. It pays to understand yourself as a sitter, the things that work for you and the things that don't work.
- As a sitter, you're a pretty important person in the life of the child. He may watch you closely, and copy from you. Be sure you're setting a good example.

The sitter is not the parent

Of course, you know well that you are substituting for a parent when you take on a sitter's job—you don't try to become a parent for the hours you are with the child. You can't love him just like the parent does. You can't punish him like some parents might (spanking, for example). And you can't be responsible for some of the not-so-nice habits and ways that a few children learn long before you became their sitter!

In other words there are real limits to your job. As you are not the parent, you also are not nurse, doctor, or housekeeper. Once in a while you run across a parent who forgets this. Then it may be up to you to let the family know about the limits to your job. Sometimes this may not be so easy. But you probably know by now that every job has its problems, and child care is no exception.

Do as the parents asked you to do

This is one of your chief obligations as a babysitter. Even though you are not the parent, you must try to treat the child very much in the same way that the parent would.

This is important because small children can get upset if grownups handle them in different ways. Children get used to doing things in certain ways and according to rules. When someone comes along and changes all the rules, it's as if the world has suddenly changed. As you know, the world of a child is a very much smaller

place than your world or the world of parents.

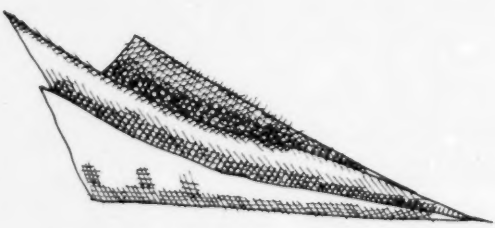
In order to do like the parent does, you have to find out from the mother or father:

- What the child is really like.
- How the home is actually run.
- What the parent wants done with the child regarding bedtime, snacks, enjoyable games, etc.

Of course, this is a big order, and no sitter can be expected to know every last little thing about the child or the home. In this handbook we will mention a number of important things you will have to look out for. Even though we will try to give you a few hints on how to handle different situations, in every case you must ask whether it fits in with the special home and the special child you happen to be caring for.

Use your own know-how

What about yourself, your special skills and abilities? You're probably the best expert on that. Maybe you're the careful and quiet type who does best with one child at a time. Or maybe you have a real gift for working with older and pretty active children, but small babies make you a bit nervous.



Understand your own preferences and make use of your own brand of know-how. If you have special talents, be sure to put them to work. Perhaps you're a born storyteller, or maybe you can pick out a tune on the guitar. Do you know how to fold newspaper into George Washington hats or rowboats? When you were little did you learn songs or riddles with hand movements? It may not seem like a great deal to you, but children can get a big

kick out of watching and trying these things with you.

You have to protect yourself as well as the child

For your own sake it's important to let your own parents know exactly where you will be when you take on a sitting job. Also, they should know when they can expect you home. Whenever possible, your own parents should meet and get to know the new families you sit for.

Sometimes people advertise for sitters in places such as schools and Y's. Also, you sometimes run across ads in laundromats, supermarkets, drug stores, or club houses. Be very careful when you answer such ads. Try to find out about the person who put in the ad. It is often best to ask your parents to do this for you, or you can find out if any of your friends have ever sat for this person. If you can't make sure that the job is one you will be comfortable in, pass it up. Babysitters are in much demand; you will have no trouble finding another opportunity. Above all, do not go into a strange neighborhood or into an apartment or house which is new to you unless you have a parent or friend to take you to the door and meet with the parent requesting the sitter. Also, never agree to take a car ride with a strange person to the place where you are supposed to do your sitting.

During nighttime sitting, it's a good idea to lock the front and back doors of the house. In case you have a visitor, make very sure who it is before you decide to open the door.

Another precaution for your safety and the child's: Do not take a sitting job when you are feeling sick.

Special pointers for girl sitters

Whenever you have a late sitting job, a parent—usually the father—should see you back to your home. This is important even if you live only a few blocks away.

Some parents don't mind if you have friends on the job. But usually they expect

these to be girl friends and not boy friends. Be sure to ask the parents how they feel about this matter and agree on "house rules" before your job begins. Whether or not you have other teenagers with you, one thing you have to be very clear about:

* * * *

YOUR MAIN JOB IS TO WATCH THE CHILD

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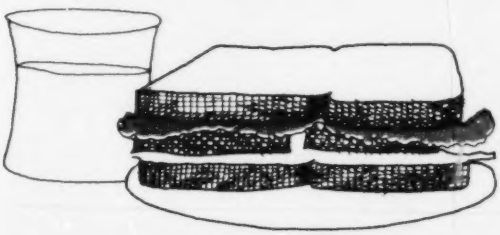
If you are permitted to have company, never leave the child with them—even for a minute. Remember you took on the responsibility. It cannot be delegated to someone else. Also do not take the child to a place his parents have not OK'd in advance. If you're the kind of girl who just can't help getting into those long, long talks with friends, then it might be best for you to do your sitting by yourself.

One last point: Some men forget—or almost forget—that sitters are sitters. They try to treat them like girl friends instead of babysitters. You'll probably never run into such a man, but if you do, turn the child over to him and leave promptly. If you think you may have misunderstood and he was only being friendly, it still pays to be on your guard. Don't accept later job offers in a household where you have been uncomfortable about a male visitor or member of the family.

Special pointers for boy sitters

More and more boys are being hired as sitters. They're great favorites with children and also with many parents. You can understand why mothers and fathers, when they go away for the evening, feel safe in having "a man around the house." Boys can be very good with groups of children and usually have lots of energy for playground or group activities.



Young men often are big eaters. If you

have refrigerator privileges, try not to eat the parents out of house and home. It's okay to make a sandwich, but don't eat the whole ham.

Also, try not to become too active or too rough with young children. Many youngsters will want you to whoop it up with them for as long as you can take it, but too much roughhousing can be hard on small bodies. Sometimes too, unless quieting activities, such as storytelling are tried with the child, he may be too excited to go to sleep at bedtime. Save the special stunts for fun with your own pals.

Some men and boys—and it doesn't depend on their age—have a special need to let the world know they're superman. But children know you're a male and not a female. You don't have to go out of your way to prove it to them. Be especially careful about your language—this goes for girl sitters as well—the children you sit with may know some bad words but you don't want to encourage their use or to teach any new words. Also, you won't keep the job long if the parents notice a new vocabulary cropping up.

Don't be afraid to be gentle and loving with children. They expect and need tender handling, whether the sitter is young or old, a boy or a girl.

Getting Along with Parents

There are as many different kinds of parents as there are different kinds of children. Some are strict, some are easy going. Some tell the sitter exactly what they expect of him, others leave things pretty much up to the sitter.

In getting along with different kinds of parents, it will help if you have certain rules of your own. Here are a few suggestions for you to consider.

Put it in writing.
This is the best way to remember instructions. The following are especially

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important and should always be in writing:

- Phone numbers where a parent can be reached while the sitter is in the home.
- Phone number where a doctor can be reached in case of emergency.
- Phone number of special emergency services—such as rescue squad, fire and police departments.

You might want to make a list of the important information you should always have at hand. Some of the things you will want to include are listed below and on page 10.

THINGS TO WRITE DOWN

Important phone numbers:

Where parents can be reached

Where doctor can be reached

Close friend or neighbor

Police Department Dial "operator"

Fire Department Dial "operator"

Special information

Bedtime

Meal (or snack) time

THINGS TO KNOW

Names and nicknames of children

When parents are expected to return

TV rules for children

Sleeping arrangements

Where clothing, toys and special equipment are kept

Favorite stories, games, and activities

Where children play

Dangerous or "off limits" areas in house or yard

Special habits or problems of children (fear of the dark, etc.)

Sitter's privileges regarding TV, stereo, refrigerator

Be clear about money matters.
If the parent forgets to bring this up ahead of time, then you will have to do so. Let him know what your rates are. If you charge time and a half after a certain hour, you will have to make this clear. When the job is over, present your bill before leaving the house.

Don't monopolize the telephone.
If you spend most of your time on the telephone, this makes you a phone addict and not a babysitter. Also, somebody might want to phone you or leave an important message for the parents. So try to keep the telephone free for receiving calls.

Frankness is the best policy. Let the parents know what the score is. Report things that go wrong, accidents, or happenings that you think parents should know about.

Don't be afraid to own up to your own mistakes.
Most parents will respect you for this. Suppose you lost your temper, or suppose you just couldn't handle a child in a certain situation. Perhaps you have broken something. Your best bet is to let the parent know, to talk about it.

If you don't know, ask.
May you have a visitor on the job? Are you permitted to take a snack from the refrigerator? Will the parents expect you to phone and remind them if they do not return after a certain hour? How long can you play the TV without disturbing the neighbors? Is there equipment (stereo, tape recorder) that is not to be used by children or the sitter? If you have doubts, parents will appreciate it if you ask about these matters.

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Be clear about added duties.
Parents sometimes expect sitters to do extra chores, such as cleaning up, washing dishes, or even ironing. Have it clearly understood what jobs you do or don't do. And remember: Your main job is to be a babysitter, to keep the child safe and secure. All other chores come second to this.

Be responsible; be polite. This shows in many ways:

- By dressing neatly and sensibly.
- By speaking in a friendly way to parents and children.
- By coming on time.
- By letting parents know as far ahead of time as possible in case you get sick or can't keep your engagement.

Getting Along with Children

Before we mention some of the many things that sitters have to know about, it's a good idea to say a little about what children are like in general.

No two are alike

All children are different (as if you didn't know!), and the good babysitter is the one who has a keen eye for the differences.

Just to know that you're going to be watching a 4-year-old doesn't tell you very much. He may be a fast or a slow growing 4-year-old.

1. Children can be ahead and behind at the same time. Let's take Nancy as an example. She's 5 and big for her age. When you meet her she seems very bright, talks a lot, knows many words and asks a lot of intelligent questions. But when you get to know her better, you find out that Nancy isn't very good at outdoor games, has trouble in getting along with other children, and sometimes makes a big fuss in separating from her mother. In other words, Nancy is ahead in some ways but behind in others.

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2. All children learn, but not the same things. Mark and Tommy live in the same block, both are 6 years old, and play together. Neighbors keep saying how much they seem alike, "just like brothers." But when you sit for Mark or Tommy you find out that no matter how alike they may seem, they are both unique persons.

They're both bright and active but not in the same way. Mark is blunt. He tells you exactly what he thinks. He never asks for help, even when he really needs it, and his main interest right now is in building railroads and space stations.

Tommy asks a lot of questions and always wants to know what you think. He's very polite about asking for help, and his chief interest is in animals. He knows more about horses and dogs than you do. Even though Mark and Tommy are quite a bit alike, they have learned different things about the world, and different ways of getting along with people, including baby-sitters.

There's usually a reason

Of course we can't always figure out the reason, but behind all the strange or unusual things that a child might do there is often a very definite cause. People who take care of children—including professional people like teachers, nurses, and psychologists—find that they do a better job when they try to look for the reasons that cause behavior.

This doesn't mean that whenever you face a problem with a child you have to sit down and think about it for a half hour. This won't work. Also there are some things that may endanger a child and these require prompt, definite, quiet action. Other things can be ignored because they will pass if you don't make a fuss.

But as you get to know a child you can sometimes figure out what makes him act the way he does. This can be very useful to you. It will make your job more interesting and satisfying. It will also sometimes give you a chance to be of real help to a child, and this can be one of the most wonderful things about babysitting.

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Words, words, words

Most 3-year-olds are beginning to talk in sentences, and learning quickly. Every day they pick up new words. Every day they discover new and exciting things about the world, and as they grow older, children learn to put these discoveries into words.

It's important for all grownups to help children learn new words, to help them to talk, and to answer their many questions. When sitting with very small children, it's usually best to avoid "baby talk." But even infants too young to understand what you say benefit from being talked to and can appreciate your friendly tone of voice.

Try to be a good and honest teacher. If the child asks questions which are up to the parent to answer, then direct the child to his mother or father. And let the parent know about it.

Always on the go

Children learn not only through words; they also learn with their bodies.

Most children don't want to be watchers or lookers-on. They want to be doers. Whenever you can, try to give the child a chance to bring up his own ideas, and then to carry them out. Sometimes sitters bring new ideas into a child's play to try to make the game even better. This is fine if the child is getting bored, but it can distract him if he isn't. When the child is playing happily, the sitter should leave well enough alone.

Children love to touch, feel, smell and taste things. They try over and over again to find out what things are really like. This is why small babies are always putting things into their mouths, and why older children are such great explorers.

You can't always allow a child to do what he wants with his body, because what he wants to do may be dangerous. Sometimes you can suggest other things to do. And sometimes you can help the child learn through words, through looking and talking

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and listening, and not with his body.

Children have important feelings

Everybody has feelings. This includes babies 9 months old, as well as people 90 years old. It includes the babysitter, too.

As we get older, we learn to talk about our feelings. We don't bite or kick or yell. Instead, we use words to let the other person know how we feel. (Sometimes the feelings are so strong that we forget to use words, and end up by kicking or yelling anyway.)

It isn't always easy for children to bring out their feelings. Grownups have to help them. We do this by helping the child find good ways to bring out his feelings. Usually this is through words and during play. Other sections of this handbook will give you some ideas about helping children bring out their feelings in ways that are good for children and good for grownups.

How about your own feelings? As a sitter, certain things are bound to make you upset or angry or worried. You have a right to talk about these feelings with the parents of the children you sit for, and also with your own mother, father and friends. But while you are with a child, you must be comforting, loving, and protective. Until the job is over, do your best to put away any hurt, irritation or fear you may feel because, right now, you are responsible for his care. Generally, you can trust your instincts when deciding how to respond to him—if, of course, **you like yourself and the children you are caring for.** A young person with any doubts about these two matters should find work other than babysitting.

Sometimes you can run across one child who stirs up angry feelings in you, a child that you just don't get along with. In this case, your best solution is to let the parents know that you don't consider yourself the best sitter for their child.

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Keep Them Safe— Keep Them Sound

Your most important job as a sitter is to watch over the physical safety of your children. This means that you must keep them away from harm. A general rule: "Never leave a young toddler alone even for a minute." (former Chairman of American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Accident Prevention)

Of course, the best way to do this is to remove dangers and keep accidents from happening in the first place.

So, the first rule is: Safety through prevention. In other words, don't wait for things to happen. Be on top of the situation ahead of time.

The following sections list some hints on safety. We are giving quite a lot of information, because we think you'll want to know what to look for and what to do just in case.

But this doesn't mean that, as a sitter, you always have to expect the worst. After all, most children are pretty strong and sturdy. They aren't made of sugar candy, so they don't melt or fall apart at the first bang or scratch. They do get into things and need to be watched closely—a better name for babysitter probably would be baby watcher because you really don't do much sitting when children are awake.

Check on danger zones [1]

A home isn't a big boobytrap, but people in the house can have a lot of accidents. Here are some things to look out for:

In the kitchen, make sure that children stay away from hot stoves, hot electrical appliances, and cords. Wipe up water or grease right after it's spilled. If a glass breaks, wipe up with wet paper toweling and put the pieces in a paper bag marked

[1] See Children's Bureau publication, "Young Children and Accidents in the Home" DHEW Publication No. (OHD) 74-34

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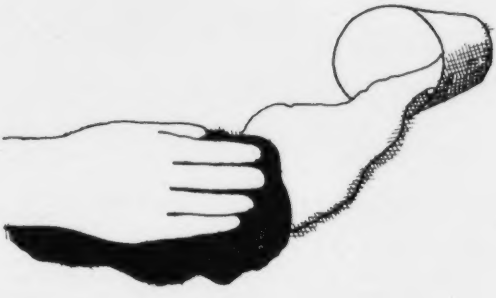

"broken glass." Sharp knives are for adults; keep them out of reach of children. Turn handles of hot pans to the back of the stove so they won't be pulled out by exploring fingers. Check to see that gas jets are turned off. If you smell gas, open a window and call the parents. They may tell you to call the fire department or gas company immediately. If, for some reason, you cannot reach the parent make the calls on your own.

Nothing delights a child more than a fire, but he should watch it and stay away from it. Never, never, allow a child to play with a match.

Most homes have small machines that whirl and slice. Fingers can be hurt if allowed to touch a revolving machine or any electrical appliance with moving parts. Keep children away from cleaning materials stored in cabinets or under the kitchen sink. In the living room and bedrooms pick up pins, needles, and other sharp objects and place them in a container out of reach. Babies and small children do not realize their dangers.

Open windows and balconies and upstairs railings are always dangerous. Keep small children away from any area where a bad fall could occur.

Of course, electric sockets and outlets can be poked into—with shocking results. If these are not closed with a plastic safeguard, you will have to keep a constant eye on the child. If a child is playing by himself behind a baby gate, always look into the situation when things get "too quiet." In the bathroom, the medicine chest often holds razor blades, powerful medicines,

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aspirin, cosmetics, and small but sharp tools. Each is dangerous in the hands of children. If after all your precautions, the child gets into something that may be dangerous, act promptly and quietly and with encouraging reassurances if the child becomes frightened or aware of danger.

If the parents want you to bathe the baby, they must tell you exactly how to do it. When bathing a child remember to test the water. Very hot water can burn young skin, and a small child can drown in less than 6 inches of water. **Never leave a young child alone in a tub of water, even for a minute.** If the telephone or doorbell rings, remove the child from the tub, wrap him with a towel, place the child in his crib with the sides up, or carry him with you before answering. Wipe water off the floor. Don't allow children to run in the bathroom.

Sometimes small children lock themselves in the bathroom. This can be very scary, for the child as well as the sitter. Usually it is best not to let a young child (under 7 or 8) go into the bathroom unless you are with him.

In dressing children after a bath or changing a baby's diaper, gather up all pins you may have removed and put them in a high place. Be sure they can't be reached by children who climb. Sitters generally should refuse to give medicines—even aspirin or cough syrup. But, if these things are to be used at the parent's direction for any reason, be sure you understand the correct dosage and how to give the medication. After use put them back in a locked or very high place. (Be sure to tell the parents where to find articles you have put away.) On the stairways, keep the steps free of toys that can be tripped over. Hold on to the banister when carrying a child; in going up stairs walk in back, in going down, walk in front of the toddler who is learning to use steps.

If you're watching a small baby and there is a stairway nearby, it should be blocked off with a gate. You can also use a heavy piece of furniture. But make sure it cannot be shoved down the stairs by the baby!

If there is a basement, keep the door closed.

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If you're going to spend time with children out of doors, then here are some other danger zones:

In the garage or storage shed, there are many things that can catch fire. So once more: no matches! Also, play away from empty (or full) gas cans, paint buckets, rusty nails, lawn mowers, and sharp or pointed tools, like rakes and spades. In the backyard, check climbing equipment for sturdiness and the ground for holes, glass, nails, stones, etc. Direct children to a safer part of the yard, or put barriers around the hazards. Block off outside basement steps or play away from them. Backyards can contain some dangerous objects. A teeter-totter, for example, can come down on a child's head. Swings can be pushed too high or come too close to children standing on the ground. Tops of sliding boards make dangerous places to fall from—and fence or tree climbing also can result in falls. Always stay with children playing out of doors. If there is a swimming or wading pool, then you will have to keep your eye on it from the second the child climbs in it to the second he gets out. Be alert too, for creeks, ponds, sewers and drainage ditches near the property. Make sure children don't stray toward them.

Driveways and roads mean moving cars and maybe racing bikes. See that children do not play in either driveway or street. Also curbs are not good places for sitting.

Big worries: fire and water

Two really big dangers are fire and drowning. Fire prevention. The main thing is to keep matches and cigarette lighters away from children.

This means that if you're a smoker, you have a special problem. The most sensible way out seems to be this: if you've got enough will power, don't smoke on the job. If you don't, keep matches hidden and douse each cigarette under the faucet.

Sometimes—we hope not for you—a fire in the home does occur. If this does happen get the children and yourself out of the house. Then call the fire department and ask a neighbor for help. Be sure that, while

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you are doing this, somebody doesn't run back into the house.

If caught in a smoke-filled room, cover nose and mouth with a handkerchief or towel, damp if possible. Then crouch down and walk to the nearest exit.

If clothing catches on fire, wrap a rug, heavy coat, or blanket around the person. Begin at the head and keep flames away from the face. Don't run. This fans the flame and may result in serious burns.

Swimming is fun—if you know how. Babysitters who don't know how to swim should not be responsible for children who are in a deep pool. You might take the American Red Cross swimming and water safety courses, then you can teach children how to swim, with the parents' permission, of course.

A wading pool, or a beach at the shore, is a different story, provided you and the children stay in shallow water.

But in every case, you must watch like a hawk when children are playing around water. A toddler can drown in a bathtub or a wading pool just as easily as he can in the middle of the ocean. A swimming pool, covered for the winter (or drained of water) is hazardous because rain water and mud collect on the cover or pool bottom.

Let's Play

Because all children want to play, they quickly come to like people who understand play and how to make it interesting.

The good sitter is a good player. He knows that children of different ages play in different ways. He knows how to keep play safe as well as interesting for the many different kinds of children that he sits for.

Babies under a year old

Older children have imagination and

ideas of their own when it comes to play. With babies under a year old, most of the ideas have to come from you. Here are some simple and safe activities that babies often enjoy.

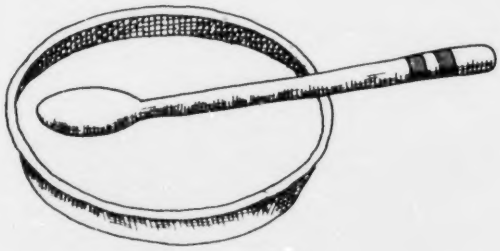
When babies are so small that they can't use their hands for holding and grabbing, they can still play by watching and looking. It's great fun for small babies to watch moving or swinging things, such as large wooden or plastic rings and balls.

- Babies who are older, who can crawl and use their hands, like to touch and feel things. Large plastic objects are good, and also cuddly toys.
- Sometimes an old hat or big purse will keep the baby busy for a long time. (Make sure it's empty.)
- Songs, gestures, (Eensweensy spider; Here is the church, here is the steeple)
- Tearing up sheets of newspaper can be fun. (Of course, you'll have to clean up the mess later.)

Keep in mind that small babies need only very short play times. Most of their time is spent in sleeping and resting. Remember also that everything usually ends up in their mouths. Be sure they do not have small articles to play with.

1- and 2-year-olds

This is the age when children learn how to walk, run, and use their hands and feet in many different ways. Most of the homes that you sit in will probably have quite a few toys, but it's surprising how happy children can be with very simple things.



Many 1-year-olds, for example, will get

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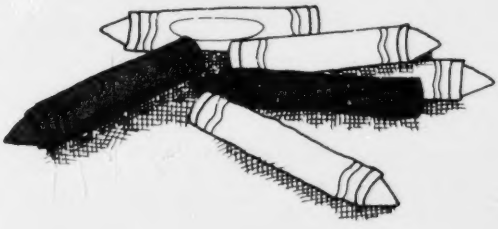
more fun out of banging with a big wooden spoon and a pie pan than they will out of a fancy windup toy. Or just pushing a small chair from one part of the room to another can be more exciting than playing with an expensive train set.

Push and pull toys are very popular, and so are games of putting in and taking out (such as putting a block into an empty can). Many children will like it if you join in.

As children grow older they become more active. They make up all sorts of jumping and leaping games. You'll have to make sure that these are safe games, and that the child doesn't get overly excited or overly tired.

Jumping from a low chair onto a large, soft cushion can be a safe game for 2-year-olds. You'll have to have an old cushion, though, one that the parents aren't too particular about.

After very active play, it's a good idea to have some quiet things to do. You can always fall back on singing, picture books, and make-believe stories in which the child you are sitting for is the hero of the adventure. Old magazines with lots of pictures are fun if the child is bored with his own books. Many 2-year-olds can also spend as much as 15 or 20 minutes drawing with large crayons and big sheets of paper. If



regular drawing paper isn't handy, you can spread sheets of old newspaper on the kitchen floor.

3- and 4-year-olds

Boys and girls of this age are growing fast in many ways. They are learning

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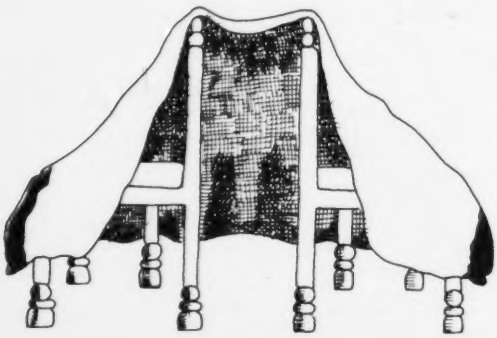
how to talk, and some of them will ask many questions and tell many stories. It's sometimes hard to keep up with them.

Four-year-olds are very good at saying "no," and they know many ways of not minding. The best way to handle these busy children is to have a lot of active, interesting things for them to do. This way you can keep one jump ahead. If you give them a chance, 3- and 4-year-olds will have great fun playing with sand, clay, water, and mud. Since this can be messy, you have to be cheerful about cleaning up afterwards. (Let the children help you.)

Hide-and-seek or follow the leader games are favorites at this age. You can play them with even one child, and sometimes the child can be the leader.

Having parties and playing with dolls can keep children busy for a long time. Some 3- and 4-year-olds are very good at "pretend" games, and you can count on a lot of ideas coming from the youngsters themselves.

Making a "tent" is exciting for most children, even older ones. Just spread an old sheet or blanket between pieces of furniture, making a closed-in and cozy space. You can read, tell stories, or have parties inside the tent.



5- and 6-year-olds

Children at this age are often in a nursery school or kindergarten. This means that they know many different games and ways of playing. Very often they will be

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able to teach you new games.

Still, you have to be ready with some ideas of your own in case the child gets bored or fussy. Here are some activities to keep in mind:

Simple games of skill. Just give the child some soft rubber balls or bean bags, and the games will almost make themselves up. But don't let them get too wild.

Guessing games. One of the easiest and the best is the one in which you or the child think of an object in the room, and then the other person has to guess it. Be sure to give a lot of hints when the child gets stuck.

Building games. Children will build almost anything: stores, bridges, towers, spaceships, train stations, airports, zoos, farms. Wood or plastic blocks of all sizes are a favorite, but you can use other things for building, including cartons and boxes and clothes pins.

Role playing games. Children can be very busy with running a store, a restaurant, a gas station, etc., or having a party, a school, —. Potatoes can be used for animal bodies (using toothpicks for eyes). Paper colored by the child can be placed on toothpicks to make feathers or give animals faces.

Cutting and pasting. Have a supply of old magazines. Large ones with colored pictures are the best. Use blunt scissors, and try not to get the furniture all sticky with paste. If parents don't object, children this age are very good at pasting trading stamps in books.

Storytelling and music. Now the stories can be longer and more complicated. Fairytales and stories about animals and boys and girls are favorites. Be sure to stay away from scary or "bogeymen" stories. Many children will dance and sing along with records if you suggest it to them.

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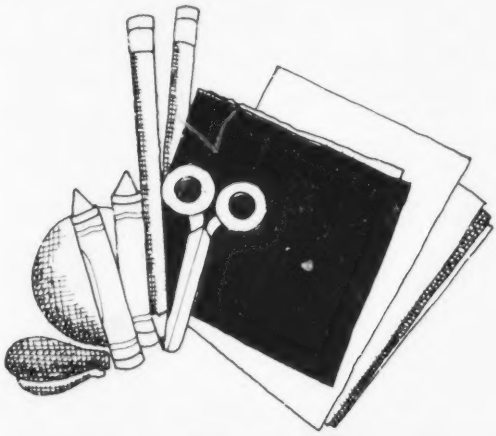
The babysitter's service kit [1]

Experienced sitters have learned that it helps to come on the job with supplies of their own. Just like doctors, nurses, and skilled mechanics have their own tools, the really professional babysitter has his own service kit.

This can be an old suitcase, a heavy canvas or plastic bag, or even an old shoebox or shopping bag.



The babysitter's kit is your own private collection of toys, surprises, and emergency needs. Here are some things that it might contain:

crayons and pencils
blunt scissors
colored paper and yarn
old envelopes and stamps
small plastic toys
balls and balloons
a notebook and pen
a flashlight
paper tissues
small adhesive bandages
two or three storybooks
several old magazines with pictures
sticky tape

Important safety rules during play

Even very active play can be kept safe

[1] See Children's Bureau publication, "Fun in the Making," DHEW Publication No. (OCD) 73-31, for useful ideas.

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if you hold to a few basic rules:

- Tiny, sharp, or pointed things should be kept away from small children.
- Toys with small parts that can come off—like glass or metal buttons on soft animals—should not be used with small babies.
- All toys should be larger than the child's two fists.
- Children should not be allowed to jump from high places.
- Climbing equipment must be checked to see that it's sturdy and won't fall apart.
- Plastic bags—like those used for dry cleaning and other objects—should be kept away from children at all times.
- Keep shoestrings, ties and belts fastened.
- Don't allow any playing in the street.
- Don't wear jewelry with sharp points when caring for small babies.

As a near-adult you have lots more energy and steam than a child. Sometimes you can come on strong. So you may want to take it easy, a bit quieter than when you are with your friends and having fun.

Hints on Feeding

One thing you can be sure of when you're watching children for any length of time: Sooner or later they'll get hungry.

When it comes to preparing food, a babysitter is not expected to spend lots of time in the kitchen cooking fancy dishes. This takes time from your important job of being with the children. Simple foods are most desirable for young children anyway.

Parents usually know this, and most likely will have the snacks and meals planned and ready for you to warm up or serve. If they forget, be sure to ask, when and what food is to be served, and how to prepare it. Find out how the stove works, where foods and utensils are kept.

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Things to remember

Here are some general guidelines for feeding young children:

- Plan your work so as to have the child's feeding or meal ready at the time the mother directed.
- Wash your hands and the child's before preparing and serving food.
- Most young children, especially toddlers, are messy eaters.
  Be pleasant at mealtime and patient with their clumsiness.
  Better be prepared to mop up some spilled food. You can help keep yourself clean by wearing an apron or smock. (Don't scold if he spits food at you, he's usually being playful—not naughty.)
- Allow plenty of time for the meal or snack. Children sometimes take a bite and then look at the food or talk for a few minutes.
  This is okay, and they shouldn't be rushed.
- If the child won't eat at mealtime, don't get upset.
  Remember, he may be tired or you may be strange to him. Give him enough help with eating, but don't force him.
- If the baby drops eating utensils, or his bottle, on the floor, wash them off with hot water or get clean ones for him.

Meal or snack time should be a happy time. Try to make it a quiet time. If there's a lot of activity or noise in the room, the baby or youngster may be too excited to eat. In some homes, children eat meals while watching TV. If the parents allow this, then go along with this custom. Ask the parents about other suggestions as to the best ways to get cooperation at mealtime.

Keep your eye on the child in the high chair. He should not be allowed to stand up or to rock the chair. Be sure the safety catch or leg strap is fastened on the chair. Be sure his high chair is well away from the stove.

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Giving the baby his bottle

Most mothers prepare the baby's daily supply of milk or formula at one time. Find out if this is done. You will need to have clear written instructions on the time to feed the baby, and how to warm up the bottle after taking it out of the refrigerator—if that is what the parents want you to do. Also ask if you are to give him water or fruit juice in a bottle if he becomes fretful in between mealtimes.

If you are to warm the bottle, that is usually done by standing it in a small deep saucepan with 3 or 4 inches of warm water in it. Heat the water quickly. It is not necessary for the water to boil. Shake the bottle several times while it is warming to make sure the milk is warmed through.

Other important points to remember:

- The rubber nipple of the bottle must not be touched by you, otherwise it will no longer be sterile (free of germs). If the nipple does touch something, replace it with a sterile

one from the mother's clean supply or use a fresh bottle.

- The milk must not be too hot. Most people test the milk by shaking out a few drops on the inside of their wrist.
- Always wash your hands before handling the bottle.

It's best to sit in a chair and hold the baby in your arms when you give him the bottle. Allow plenty of time. Also, when the baby is too young to hold the bottle himself, you must hold it for him: Never try to prop it up.

Ask the parents to tell you about burping the baby. This is done after the feeding, or sometimes once or twice during the feeding. You hold the baby against your shoulder and pat him on the back. (Be careful not to pat him too hard.) He lets out a burp. This helps get rid of the air that he sometimes swallows along with the milk.

Solid food for the older baby

The parents may wish you to use ready prepared solid foods such as infant's cereal, strained or chopped fruits, vegetables and meats for the baby. These canned foods can be warmed up like the bottle in a pan of water. Ask about the kind and amount of food to give and how it is usually prepared to serve the baby or young child.

When the baby is learning to eat solid foods or new food he may spit some of it out. You will have better luck if you don't put too much on the spoon when you offer it to the baby. Give him a little bit at a time. Remember to be pleasant and patient. Don't try to get the baby to eat by amusing him; he soon learns that refusing to eat is one way of getting attention.

Food for older children

You might be sitting for a parent who expects you to prepare snacks or even meals on your own. In this case ask them

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to leave you a written menu, with instructions about where the food is and how to prepare it.

Sometimes an older child helps himself to food the mother had not planned for him. These raids might be prevented by knowing what the parent has planned for older children and what the mother expects of you with respect to the older child. You should report overeating to the parents.

Let's Get Dressed

When the baby has to be changed

The mother will probably tell you about changing diapers. Most mothers will have the following things ready for you:

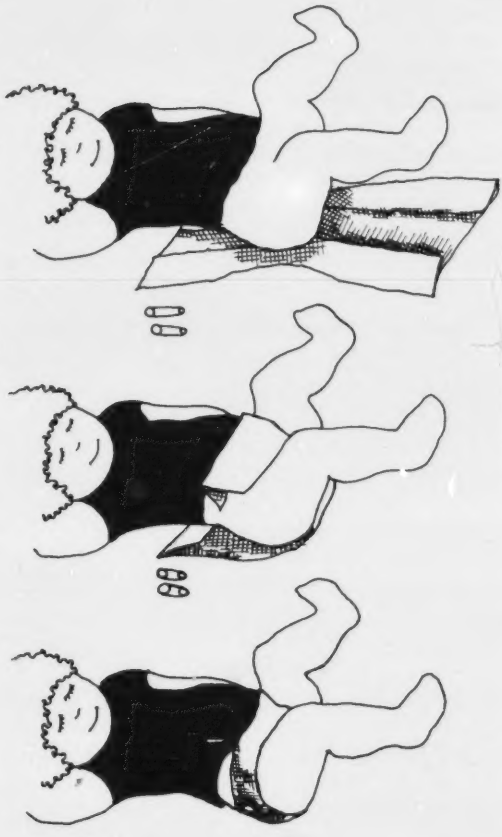
1. **Clean diapers**
2. **Large safety pins**
3. **Paper tissues**
4. **A wash cloth**

There are many ways of putting on a diaper. The pictures below will help you learn one simple way for using cloth diapers. The newer, disposable diapers are ready to use without folding and some cloth diapers also are made to fit the baby. Other diapers have tabs which eliminate the need for pins.

Wash the baby in the diaper region with each diaper change. Use warm water and mild soap.

After a wet diaper is removed, it should be dropped in the diaper pail or some other metal container (preferably one with a cover). Don't leave diapers around on the floor.

If the diaper is soiled, put it aside while you clean the baby. Clean carefully around the folds of his legs, but don't risk irritating with a lot of wiping around delicate areas. If the soiled diaper is made of cloth, rinse the soil away in the toilet bowl and drop the diaper in the proper pail.



If the diapers are the disposable kind, ask the parents how to dispose of them, or read the instructions on the box.

Important note: All safety pins must be closed and out of reach of the baby.

Dressing the older child

There isn't too much you have to know about clothing for the older child. These are the main things:

- Sometimes small children like to run around without shoes, socks, or even shirts and pants. If the parents don't mind, this is okay. If they do mind, you'll have to tell youngsters to keep their clothes on.
- It can be very hard on a child if his clothing is too tight. If you have to change underwear or sweaters, for example, try to choose the ones that are loose.

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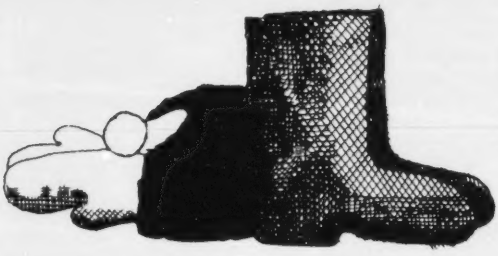
- After playing around water or a pool, it's a good idea to check for dryness. In case the child is pretty wet, he needs a change of clothing.



- For outdoor play in cold weather, make sure the child is warm and buttoned up. Don't forget cap and mittens. When the child comes back indoors, always check for wet shoes and socks (almost all children love puddles).
- Children of 2 and older can often help dress themselves. But you have to go slowly. Even if they are very good at dressing, always offer help with shoelaces.

What to do if...

A babysitter sometimes has to be a troubleshooter. You have to be ready for the unexpected.

No one in the world can tell you about everything that might come up when you're sitting with a child. And every once in a while you run into a problem for which there doesn't seem to be an answer. You just live through the problem and hope for the best.

Still, here are a number of common situations with some hints on what to do if:

Baby won't stop crying

Some babies cry a lot more than others, but most of them cry for a real reason. Try to find out the reason:

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- Is he too warm or too cold?
- Does his diaper need changing?
- Does he have a stomachache?
- Is he hungry?
- Is he sick?
- Is he just plain lonely?

You already know what to do about meeting the first two problems.

If the baby has a stomachache, it may help to burp him gently. An air bubble trapped inside can cause pain and even make him think he is hungry. Often the crying will stop as soon as he burps. Swallowing air is a problem when babies eat and also when they have been crying a lot. A baby who has been allowed to cry often will end up later on with a stomachache. Sometimes the air won't come up. It may help to put him down on his stomach and to rub his back gently. Sometimes, all you can do is rock him in your arms to make the discomfort more bearable for him. Eventually the gas will pass and he will be happy again.

If it has been a while since his last feeding and you think he may be hungry, you may have to give him something in between meals. Sterile water (boiled 20 minutes) or baby fruit juice in his bottle may hold him until the next regular feeding. If he doesn't nurse with much enthusiasm, or nurses well for a few minutes and then stops, the problem probably isn't hunger. Some babies will act very eager for the bottle because it is soothing and then begin crying again when they realize they aren't hungry.

Teething can cause crying and the mother may have left something to ease pressure on the baby's gums. If not, try rubbing them gently with a very clean finger.

If the baby seems sick, you will have to decide if it is serious enough to call the parents. If not, try to quiet him with rocking and singing (or by walking with him). If he has a cold and a stuffy nose, he may breathe more comfortably if he doesn't have to lie flat. You can prop him in your arms or, if the mother has one, you can put him in a plastic baby carrier which has a little tilt for his back. Babies with colds

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may have a lot of trouble taking the bottle at feeding time. If their noses are stopped up, they can't breathe while they are nursing. They will take the bottle eagerly and then may begin to scream. All you can do is remove the bottle from the baby's mouth a number of times so he can get his breath.

If you think he may be lonely, give him lots of attention. Maybe he is wide awake and not ready to have you put him to bed. If this is the problem, hold him and love him. Keep things very quiet though, so he will unwind and get sleepy.

Some babies will go on crying even after you've done everything you can think of. Try leaving them alone for 10 minutes and the crying might stop. But if the baby keeps right on crying and sounds very unhappy, then it's best to hold him, rock back and forth, or hum a song. You might have to keep this up for as much as 30 or 45 minutes.

It might save you a lot of trouble, when you're watching a baby, to ask the parents to tell you when and how much the baby usually cries. Some mothers are very good at figuring out what the baby's crying means. These mothers can give you a good idea of what kinds of crying to expect from a baby, and what to do about it.

The child keeps popping out of bed

This sometimes happens when children are being watched by new sitters. In this case, it's best to give in the first two or three times the child comes out of bed to be with you. Maybe he isn't quite sure about you, and is getting worried about his parents.

Sometimes children are just plain bored, can't fall asleep, and come out looking for something to do. If you think this is the case you might agree to allow a special 5 minutes "out-of-bed" time. But let him know that this is a special privilege, and that when the clock shows that 5 minutes are up, back he goes. It's a good idea to keep this "out-of-bed" time a quiet one. Otherwise, the child may become so active and wide awake that it will take some time for him to relax for sleep.

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If it looks like the child is beginning to make a game out of bed-jumping, then you'll have to become very firm about letting him know you won't play the game. Be gentle, but put your foot down. Offer to stay in his room with him, to allow a quiet time in bed for a few minutes—but no more popping out.

Younger child wants to call his parents on the phone

Some parents expect to be called by their children at least once during the evening, and don't mind this at all. Find out before parents leave how they feel about such calls.

If you're a new sitter or the child seems upset or worried about something, then you might allow two or even three phone calls if the parents agree.

But if Susie wants to chatter with her Mommie or Daddy just for fun, then it isn't fair to the parents. After all, they hired you to be the babysitter so that they could go out for the evening.

You can explain that mother and father are busy now but will be glad to talk with Susie when they get back. Meanwhile, if Susie wants to play a telephone game how about doing it with you the sitter? You can carry on an exciting "pretend" telephone talk in which you take the part of the

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parent—or anyone else, grandmother, teacher, or a storybook person. Sometimes a call to the "weather lady" (the recorded telephone forecast service) will delight a small child.

Temper tantrums

Many different things can cause a temper tantrum:

- Being angry or hurt
- Not being allowed to have your way
- A broken toy
- Being sick, lonely, frightened, or tired
- Trying very much to do something that's just too hard to do
- Being made fun of by another child

There isn't much you can do right during the time the child is having the tantrum. Try to keep calm yourself. Stand by to make sure he doesn't hurt himself or break something.

Tantrums usually don't last long. When they're just about over is the time to comfort the child, and to offer him an idea about something nice or exciting to do. It usually won't help much to try to have the child talk about what caused him to have the tantrum.

Children begin fighting and won't stop

If you're watching more than one child there are bound to be a few scraps and arguments. Most of these you can forget about.

But you'll have to move quickly to put a stop to it if the fighting looks like it's getting serious, or if one child seems to be always hitting away at another one.

The best way to do this is to separate the children by getting them to play with different things, or in different parts of the room. Trying to be the umpire or the judge isn't much good. It's hard to figure out who started what. So try not to get pulled into an argument along with the children.

Sometimes brothers and sisters fight out of jealousy. There are probably important

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reasons behind the jealousy, but it's hard for you, the sitter, to know what those reasons are.

Your best bet is again to separate the children. It's natural to want to side with the smaller one, but you'll probably do more good by spending extra time with the older child. Show him ways that he can have a special good time with you. (That's more fun than banging on his younger brother or sister.)

The child threatens you in a nasty way

Sometimes children who have many different babysitters find special ways of teasing or playing tricks on the sitter. These may be the older children, or the ones with special problems.

Don't take these tricks or threats too seriously. Whenever you can, try to make a joke out of them. If the child finds he can make you flustered, he may keep it up.

If the child looks as if he's about to do something really bad, then it pays to be quite firm with him. Let him know that whatever he does will be reported to his parents. With a small child it may help to express your disappointment. You might say something like: There was such a nice girl (or boy) here a little while ago—I wonder when she will come back. It's also important to let the child know that you can't be won over to do something against the parents' rules.

Older child wets bed, cries, gets upset

When younger children aren't fully toilet trained, they often wet the bed. Most of them sleep right through it, and the parents are used to this.

But older children can sometimes be bed-wetters too. If a 6- or 7-year-old wets his bed—has an "accident"—he might get very upset about this and come to you for help.

Your main job is to comfort him, to let him know that "accidents" can happen to anybody. If you can, offer to help change

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the bed by putting on a clean sheet. When a child is very sleepy it may be best not to bother with clean linens. He can be made fairly comfortable quickly if you pull off wet pajama bottoms and place a thick bath towel over the damp spot on the bed. In a chilly house, it's not a good idea to let the child sleep in a soaking bed. If he is cold and wet, wake him up long enough to put a towel under him and change his clothes.

Children use "bad" language

Some 4- and 5-year-olds are good at using pretty strong language. (And so are the older ones.) They might enjoy using this language on their sitter.

Usually the best thing to do is to overlook this. Anyway, don't take it personally, because most often young children don't really understand the "badness" in the words they use.

Child breaks loose and starts to run away

Some children do this to tease. Some do it because a new or strange thing catches their eye and they want to see what it's all about. Very few children ever really want to run away.

The best way to handle this situation is to stand your ground. Tell the child in a loud but calm voice that you expect him to wait for you, that wherever he wants to go, you can go together.

If you are dealing with a very young child—one who's just learning how to run, maybe—then there's always danger that he might run into the street. In this case, your best bet is to chase after him as fast as you can right from the start. Then let him know that he'll have to play indoors if he wants to do any more wild running. When taking walks, make clear that you insist on holding hands to cross the street. If you don't trust him to stay with you at other times, hold his hand for the whole walk.

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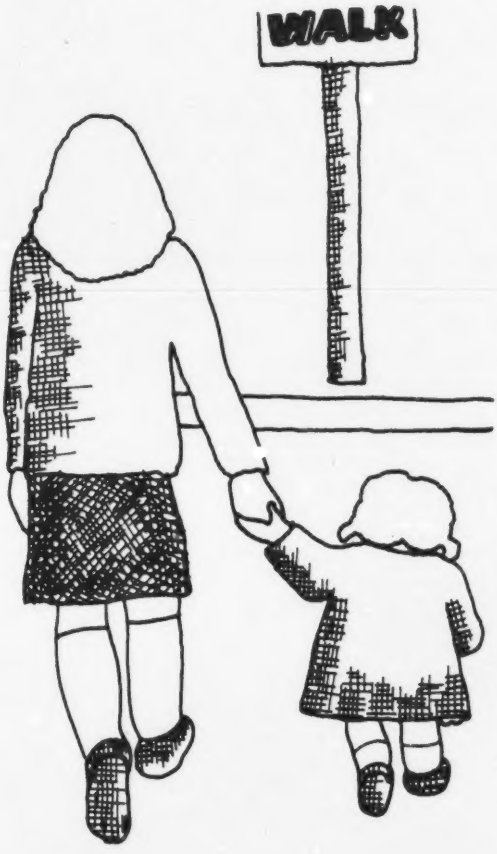

A child acts very shyly

This sometimes happens when the sitter is new to the family. Also, some children are just naturally shy, and it takes them a long time to warm up to any grownup.

Go very easily with the shy child. Give him a lot of time to figure out for himself that you're friendly and that he can trust you.

Often you can get a shy child to play with you if you begin the activity yourself. You might try something like this: Take three colored balls out of your kit and begin tossing them slowly into a basket in a throwing game. After a while, have one of the balls roll near the child. It's hard not to pick up the ball and at least roll it back.

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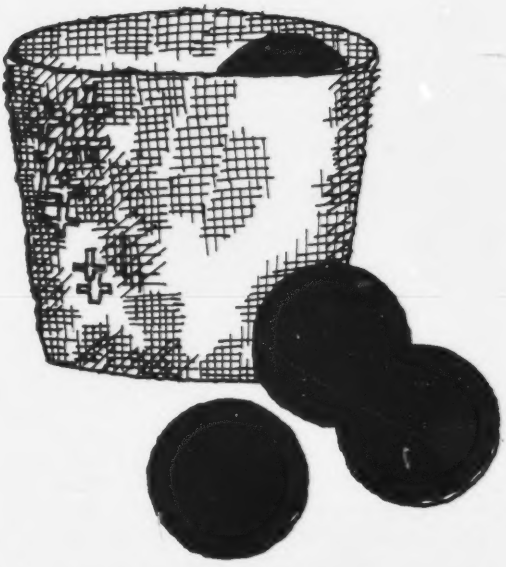

A child gets very active or excited

When a youngster puts on a big head of steam, it's not so easy to quiet him down.

Some children are very high strung and always on the run. If you're sitting with such a child, of course you'll try to keep him from getting too worked up in the first place.

If a child is already worked up, here are some things you can do to help simmer him down:

- Suggest an active and simple game, but not quite as active as what he is now doing. If he's running around wildly, for example, suggest a "walking race."
- Offer him something very good to eat. Active children are often hungry ones as well. But have him sit down at the table while he's eating. This will at least get him off his feet.
- Have a "test of strength and skill" game with him. This is active, but it isn't wild. In this game the idea is for the child to do a number of "hard" things that you suggest to him—lifting a small chair with one hand, jumping to reach a branch of a tree, doing something while hopping on one foot, and so on.
- Suggest a time limit—say, 5 minutes—to his present activity. After this, you'll have a "surprise" for him. Of course,

he has to be settled down when you're giving him his surprise. This can be any little toy for him to keep, such as a fancy balloon, a pipe for blowing soap bubbles, or a tiny doll. Then suggest some quiet play using the new toy.

- If all else fails and there is a bath on his schedule anyway, pop him into a warm tub. Sit quietly by him while he splashes, then offer a story afterward.

Going to Bed

Very small babies sleep a lot of the time. If you follow the parents' instructions, you probably won't have much trouble with bedtime when you're watching children under 1½ years old.

But when children get older—say, between 2 and 6 years—putting them to bed can get tricky.

Know the family routine

It will help to know the usual way the child is put to bed, and then to follow this pretty closely. Most children have a "getting ready" time which can last 10 or 15 minutes. This is the time when you give a friendly warning, and help the child finish his play.

In being friendly, you also have to know how to be firm. If you give the child the idea that you are a "softy" and that you don't really mean business, this can make things very hard on you and the child. Most children will listen to you when they know you are firm as well as fair.

Getting Johnny into bed

Let's say, for example, that the parents have told you how their Johnny or Susie is usually put to bed. First Johnny gets into his night clothes, with your help, and then he's allowed to play a few extra minutes before actually climbing into bed.

Well, when the time comes, you give Johnny a fair warning and then help him into his pajamas. He may make a little fuss,

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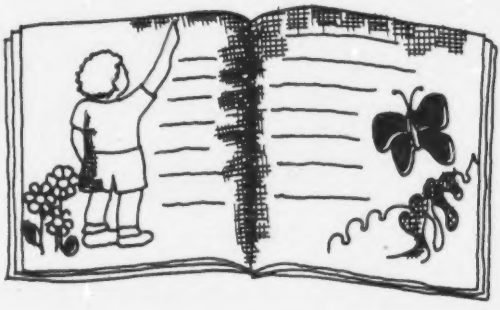
but he goes along with you because he knows he'll still have a few more minutes of play. But when those minutes are long past, and Johnny lets you know that as far as he's concerned he's never going to bed—what do you do next?

This is when you have to show your talents as a babysitter. Here are some things you can try:

- Make a game of having the child put all his toys to bed, one by one. This might put him in a better mood for going to sleep himself.
- Talk with him for a few minutes about all the good and pleasant things he'll be able to do the next day, when he wakes up. But for this he needs his sleep—so that he'll be fresh and rested and ready to go again.
- It might help to put him in the right mood by telling him a story about how a young boy or girl just like the child you are sitting with got ready for bed and went to sleep.
- Something warm to drink — like hot chocolate — works with certain children.
- Offer to tell his favorite story or to read his favorite book—but only after he's in bed.



- With some children it works to just swoop them up in your arms and carry them off to bed. But you will have to know how to do this in a pleasant way. Otherwise you may have a temper tantrum on your hands.
- After the light is out, offer to sit beside his bed for a few minutes if he promises not to talk.

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Bedtime can be a scary time

There are a number of reasons why bedtime can be fearful for children.

Going to bed often means having to be alone in a dark room. And it's natural for many children to be afraid of the dark.

Going to bed also means having to be away from grownups. A small child can feel lonely or unprotected without his parents or a sitter in the room with him.

To help take away the scariness, here are some things you can do:

- Spend time with the child in his bedroom. Give him three or four big good-night hugs, and make a big deal out of tucking him in.
- Offer to read to him, or to tell a story. Choose a pleasant or a happy story, because talking about ghosts or haunted houses at bedtime might just add to the child's fears.
- Singing can be fun and pleasant, and you don't have to have a trained voice. Of course, soft and quiet songs are best. Singing make-up songs about the child and what he will do tomorrow may not win any academy awards, but children find it comforting and reassuring. Try turning out the light and singing in the dark while he goes to sleep.
- Leaving a small light on can take away some of the fear of the dark. Sometimes just keeping the door open and having a light on in the hallway works just as well.

If you decide to stay with a nervous child until he dozes off, be unhurried about it. Your jumping up and down to leave will make him more wide awake than ever. Remember, it takes most people about 20 minutes to fall asleep.

Nightmares

Another reason why nighttime can be scary is because sleep sometimes brings bad dreams to the child.

If a child screams, shakes, or goes through

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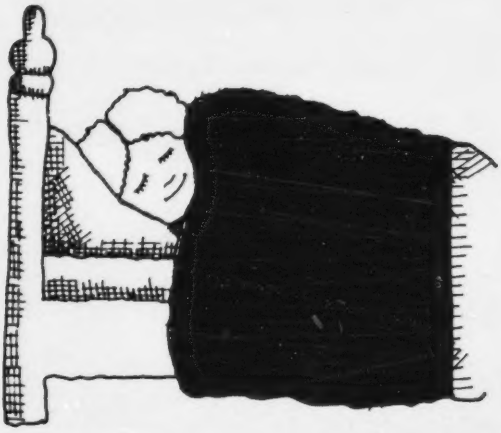
funny motions in his sleep this might mean that he's having a nightmare. In this case he needs to be comforted, to feel that you are there looking out for him, and that nothing bad will happen when he falls back to sleep.

It doesn't help much to try to explain all of this to the child. Instead, pick him up and show him that you love him. Or you can rock him in your arms for a few minutes, offer him a favorite toy, or hum a soft tune.

Should you check on the child when he's sleeping?



After children fall asleep in a quiet room they usually keep on sleeping soundly.

But as a sitter it's your job to make double-sure that everything is okay. It's a good idea to look into the bedroom every 30 or 45 minutes. After seeing that the child is in his crib or bed, check on the following:

- The blanket or bed covering, to make sure that the child is covered properly, but not over his head.
- The windows, to see that it isn't too hot or cold, too drafty or stuffy.
- Small babies have been known to get very sick, very silently in the night. When you look in on him, be sure you have enough light to see his face clearly to make sure his color is good and he is breathing comfortably. If he looks at all strange to you, pick him up and investigate the situation.

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Keeping awake (the sitter, that is)

After you've made sure that the child is sleeping soundly, you may have a different problem on your hands—to keep yourself awake.

Although a few parents won't object to a sitter sleeping on the job—especially late at night—it's not such a good idea. Imagine how you would feel if anything went wrong while you were asleep.

The best way to keep awake is to be doing something. Studying is good, because it means you have to concentrate, to keep your attention on what you're doing.

But sometimes even studying doesn't work, and you find yourself dozing off. Then you might want to try some of these:

- Splash cold water on your face, wrists or neck.
- Eat or nibble at something that takes heavy chewing. Peanut brittle is about tops in this category.
- Take a slow walk through the house.
- Whistle, sing, or recite poems to yourself. (If you don't know any poems, try making some up.)

Hints on First Aid

Even with the best care in the world, accidents will sometimes happen. Then you will have to know what to do.

The general rule is this: Whenever the situation looks like it might be serious, don't waste time. Get in touch with the parents, a doctor, or the rescue squad at once.

Here are some common—and some not so common—situations and what to do about them.

Nosebleed.
Have the child sit in a chair with his head back, or have him lying down with a pillow under his shoulders. Pinch the nostril that is bleeding toward the center of the nose. If both nostrils are bleeding, pinch the

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nostrils together with your thumb and first finger. If this doesn't stop the bleeding, apply a large, cold, wet towel over the nose and face. Be sure he is able to breathe through his mouth.

Don't allow the child to talk, cough, laugh, blow his nose or walk around. This might cause the nose to bleed more or to get it going again if it has stopped. Call the parents if you can't stop the bleeding in about 10 minutes.

Bumps and bruises—with bleeding.
Use a thick, clean cloth, and hold it directly on the open wound. Call the doctor and parents as soon as you can. Don't remove the cloth. Use pressure if the bleeding is very heavy.

Sometimes a very hard bump can knock a child out. In such cases — loss of consciousness—you mustn't move the child. Call a doctor and the parents right away. Then keep the child warm with a blanket until help comes. A bad bump on the head without unconsciousness calls for quiet activity for several hours.

Bumps and bruises.
The very light ones you can overlook. Of course, you will have to give the child a lot of comfort and loving if his feelings are hurt, even if his body isn't.

Stomach pain.
Most of these pains aren't too serious. Just keep the child rested and quiet. Be sure to report the pain to the parent—immediately if the child seems feverish or very pale.

Animal bites.
When they are deep enough to break the skin, they can be serious. Wash with soap and water, and phone the doctor. Remember what the animal looks like. If you have seen him before, tell the parents and the doctor.

Something in the eye.
Don't poke around in the eye. Tell the child not to rub the area. It's best to call the parents and tell them what has happened.

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Burns.
If it's a very light burn, you can run cold water over it. If it's a deep burn, or spread over a large part of the body, keep the child quiet and get help at once. Do not pull off scorched clothing.

Small cut or scratches.
When there is only a little bleeding: don't touch the wound or the skin near it with your fingers, clothing or any other object.

Wash your hands, then apply an adhesive bandage.

Make a note of what happened, and what you did. Then you can tell the parents when they come home.

Choking on an object.
If the child begins to cough, don't disturb him—just allow him to cough. Don't stick your finger into his throat; you may push the object further down. If he stops breathing, turn him on the back upside down and smack him between his shoulder blades.
Call the rescue squad, hospital emergency room or a doctor immediately. Do not give him water or food. Be certain to tell the parents if you think he has swallowed anything.

Poisons.
If the child swallows medicine or a household product—even if you only suspect he has done so—give him some milk or water. While the child is drinking this, get in touch with the parents and the doctor. Try to figure out how much the child took, and have the container handy while telephoning.

Hard coughing or "fits" (convulsions).
Put the child to bed. Don't cover him, because he may have a fever. Call a doctor right away for advice. (You shouldn't rub with warm water unless advised by a doctor.)

Sunburn.
If the child will be in direct sunlight more than 10 minutes make sure he's wearing a light shirt. Also, you can put on oils or lotions, and children usually go for this.

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A good way to find out more about first aid

If you are under 14 years of age, you can take the Red Cross Junior First Aid course. If you're 14 or over you can sign up for the standard course. Both courses will teach you a lot about safety, what to do in emergencies, and also about lifesaving. If you want to find out where these courses are given in your town or county, just look up the "American Red Cross" in your phone book and give them a call.

This is Only the Beginning

You may be a teenager and a babysitter today, but chances are that in not too many years time you will be a parent. Then you'll be hiring babysitters on your own or you may be working in a child care field as your career.

This handbook touches on only a few of the many important matters that a person has to know about if he wants to take good care of children. It's not too early for you to begin learning more about what makes children tick, how to make a good home for them, and how to handle special problems of childhood.

In the learning, you will come to understand yourself better and you will grow in the ability to be responsible and trusted. If you have real aptitudes or skills with children, your work with youngsters now will help you to develop them for future career use.

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